

## The South-French Society and the French Revolution - the creation of a great data base with CLIO

Smets, Josef

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:  
GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Smets, J. (1986). The South-French Society and the French Revolution - the creation of a great data base with CLIO. *Historical Social Research*, 11(2), 96-105. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.11.1986.2.96-105>

### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

### Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more Information see:  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

## current research

---

### THE SOUTH-FRENCH SOCIETY AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION - THE CREATION OF A GREAT DATA BASE WITH CLIO

Josef Smets (\*)

#### INTRODUCTION

As I have been working since three years in Göttingen on CLIO in order to adapt it to several series of german, dutch and french sources(i), we decided with Manfred Thaller and the CNUSC (Centre National Universitaire Sud Calcul) to implement this program on the IBM machines of the CNUSC in Montpellier. As we needed an informatic structure in order to receive immediately the program CLIO from the Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte, we founded the association IRHIS (Institut de Recherche Historique par l'Informatique et la Statistique) in June 1985 which has been integrated as EDP-unit in the "Commission Régionale d'Histoire de la Révolution Française: Languedoc-Roussillon".

The CNUSC of Montpellier began the transcription of CLIO in December 1985 and the responsible person (Francisco Acosta) working on CLIO since this moment, thinks that this program can probably be operational at the CNUSC in September of this year 1986.

In the same time, IRHIS and the CNUSC have discussed a cooperation plan that determines the tasks of each of them in order to make this program accessible to further users in France, like university sections in human sciences or other research units.

The CNUSC contribution consists at first in the actual transcription of CLIO on its IBM machine and, afterwards, in the maintenance of this program at Montpellier.

On the other side, IRHIS would not only assume the translation of the user's guide (from german to french) but would also test, with the help of the CNUSC, the french version of CLIO on the IBM machine.

To solve these goals, it is evident that IRHIS has to create his own historical data base before working on the CNUSC's mainframe.

Having therefore proposed the general theme: La société languedocienne avant et après la Révolution Française, 1750-1850, and realizing that the input of long documentary series is very expensive in time, IRHIS tries, from now on, to gather a large number of partners in the whole region Languedoc- Roussillon. After 1989 (bicentenary of the French Revolution) when we think to have finished a certain number of our computing and statistical methods with CLIO and other programs (such SAS, UNIRAS...) our group will extend its investigation either in the time - towards the 17th and even to the 16th century - or on whole France - in this case, we would work together with EDP-interested partners of other French universities or laboratories.

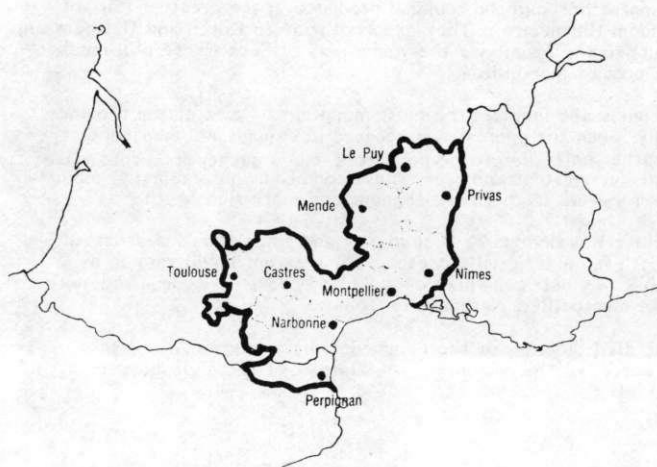
---

(\*) Address ail communications to: Josef Smets, "Le Romarin" Route de Lattes, F-34470 Pérols

#### THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Our research project concerns a part of South-France named Languedoc. In ancient France, this province has been the most extended administrative entity of the french kingdom assembling rather various regions with changing physiognomies.

FIGURE i: The Languedoc-Roussillon during the Revolution (2)



From the Rhone in the East to the Garonne in the West, from the rough mountains in the North - in fact Mont Lozère, Cévennes, Montagne Noire form an incurved line from the North to the South and, then, to the West - to the Mediterranean plain in the South, there were no other french province that had the same great number of quite different and such characteristic landscapes than the Languedoc. Not only the relief but also the climate differentiates the western part (Haut-Languedoc) under oceanic influence from the south-eastern part (Bas-Languedoc) under mediterranean influence and, finally, from the northern highlands (Massif Central) with continental climate.

So there are many contrasts which we can group in the three main landscapes just mentioned.

The Haut-Languedoc whose economic and demographic centre is undeniably Toulouse, has two faces - one agrarian, the other industrial. Its temperate climate and field structure facilitate an important cereal production monopolizing the land of this part of the Languedoc. Besides this type of agriculture, an important textile production characterizes such cities as Toulouse or Carcassonne.

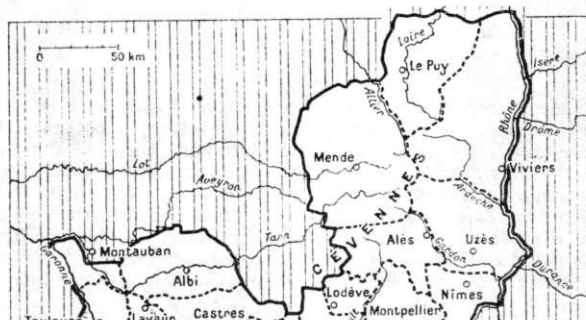
The mediterranean Bas-Languedoc is the most various of the three languedocian regions. No monoculture but polyculture reigns in its different landscapes so that the peasants try hardly to produce wheat, wine and olives according to the quality of their rather unfertile ground. Those of the Garrigues possess great sheep flocks that furnish the necessary wool to the two royal manufactories founded by Colbert (Les Sapes, Villeneuve) and four others (La Trivalle, Pennautier, Bize, Clermont) and, finally, to important drapery centres such Lodeve, Bédarieux, St. Chinian, La Bastide and La Salvetat.

The silk production was very important too and it occupied a lot of sub-venol villages and little towns (Ganges, Sauve, St. Hypolite, St. Martin-de-Londres ...) where Ganges took a key position in the trade with the rich and calvinist silk merchants of Mimes and these last with Lyon. The influent merchants of Montpellier sold the regional products on the greatest fair of the French kingdom (Beaucaire). They exported wine to Dutch and Germans and the wool products to the levant via the young port of Sète or the old, much more important port of Marseille.

The third main landscape includes the most mountainous part of the province. It has certainly been the poorest one because its rough and continental climate as its rather unfertile ground permitted only a scanty food that was essentially based on chestnut and rye. These conditions pushed many mountaineers to look for work in the more clement and more rich South.

The whole province was divided at first in 22, and since 1694 (creation of the diocese of Alès), in 23 civil dioceses. Their extent could vary in a rather perceptible way between small ones - like Lodève or Agde - and quite great ones - like Montpellier, Narbonne or Toulouse.

FIGURE 2: The civil dioceses of the Languedoc, before 1789 (3)  
 ———border of the province————border of the civil dioceses



But the entire province has always missed a veritable chief city because the rivals Toulouse and Montpellier concentrated each one different political, juridical and economic powers. The sovereign juridical institution (Parlement) was sitting in Toulouse whereas the sovereign financial court (Cour des aides) or the royal administration (Intendant) worked in the walls of Montpellier. The annual meetings of the most famous diet of the kingdom (Etats de Languedoc) which was presided over by the archbishop of Narbonne, were held at first at Pézenas and, then, at Montpellier too.

Toulousan economy was rather turned to the atlantic coast (via the Garonne to Bordeaux) and did not profit by the new channel (Canal du Midi) which connected Toulouse with the mediterranean port of Sète.

On the other hand, the commerce of Montpellier used exclusively the mediterranean ports of Marseille and Sète.

At least, Catholicism and Calvinism were rending the languedocian population and divided it, since the "Révocation de l'édit de Nantes" (1685) and the disastrous "Guerre des Camisards" (1702-1713).

As we all know, the French Revolution transformed deeply the french society. In 1790 (15 January), the old provinces, so the Languedoc, were abolished and the constituents dressed a new administrative chessboard where smaller departments unit districts, cantons and parishes. From now on, eight departments covered the ancient province of the Languedoc: Aude (Carcassonne), Ardèche (Privas), Gard (Nîmes), a part of the Haute-Garonne (Toulouse), a part of the Haute-Loire (Le Puy), Hérault (Montpellier), Lozère (Mende) and the Tarn (Castres).



(d'après J. Godechot, Les institutions de la France sous la Révolution et l'Empire. P.U.F., 1951, carte 1)

## THE DEMOGRAPHIC AREA

After these general geographic and economic observations about the Languedoc, we cannot be astonished that the human settlement in this contrasted province distinguishes regions with more or less numerous people.

As we could expect it, the mountainous landscapes - like those from Lozère, Velay and Vivarais or the lower Garrigues which are situated just between the southern plain and the northern highlands - were often desperately empty of people whereas the mediterranean urbanized coast (Bas-Languedoc), except its swampy part, or the aquitanian bassin (Haut-Languedoc) knew a real density of human settlement.

Louis Demigny(4) gave, in his time, some examples: the demographic evolution of 45 parishes in the diocese of Montpellier separates them in two nearly equal groups. Obviously there exist a natural opposition between the suburban zone just around Montpellier with fertile lands and the swampy border of the Mediterranean which was regularly ravaged by all kinds of epidemic diseases (fevers, malaria ...)(s) and also the very dry Garrigues with their rocky ground.(6)

In spite of a certain number of classic demographic studies (undertaken in the 1960s) about communities of the Haut-Languedoc (at the university of Toulouse under the direction of J. Godechot) and about those of the Bas-Languedoc (at the university of Montpellier under the direction of L. Dermigny), it is always rather difficult to estimate the population of the Languedoc nor to know exactly its demographic attitudes. Indeed these studies didn't cover the whole province and they have simply been too classic because they dealt only one village. Such problems like geographical mobility among the lower social classes troubled necessarily the results of those works which were unfortunately limited on one place. And they were also limited in time because they didn't go beyond the French Revolution.

Nevertheless, some shy estimations made by the top of the provincial administration, the intendants, provide us an approximative idea about the number of the inhabitant of this important south-french province. The intendant Basville proposes 1 500 000 inhabitants at the end of the 17th century and, nearly one hundred years later, in 1788, his collègue Ballainvilliers counts about two millions.(7)

But L. Dermigny thinks that the languedocien population has first fallen from 1 300 000 inhabitants around 1700 to 1 200 000 in 1715 and, then, has grown up to 1 700 000 in 1789(8), a growth of 42 % in 75 years which is confirmed by a number of the most important languedocien towns. And according to the very important work of Raymond Dugrand(g) about the Bas-Languedoc - which covers mainly the two departments Hérault and Gard - it seems that this demographic growth has continued during the first half of the nineteenth century so that the population of the ancient province might have reached 2 200 000, perhaps 2 300 000 inhabitants at 1850.

This population lived in 2 500 communities or 2 626 parishes whose most important towns, in 1789, were Toulouse with 52 860, Nîmes with 42 000 and Montpellier with 31 000 inhabitants.

## METHODS

In the beginning of our paper we said that IRHIS wants to constitute a historical data base about the region of the Languedeoc in using the program CLIO.(10)

Its most important features have not changed since Manfred Thaller's article



It seems evident that IRHIS cannot assure the input of such a large amount of this source material. In the beginning we confine our investigation to some precise areas which correspond to different typic landscapes and to characteristic demographic laws of the Languedoc.

This implies nevertheless that we cannot exclude the rather important phenomenon of migration which characterized the languedocian society more than we should guess. In the same time the migratory movements guide us to follow the texture of the close human and social relationships existing among the multiple languedocian landscapes.

As we know that the main direction of migration has been from country to town and from mountains to plain, we will start our research with towns like Béziers, Montpellier and Nîmes and their surrounding villages - in fact, the urban and suburban zones with the highest density.(i3)

The different immigration rates will already point out the further villages and landscapes whose registers we should input in a second stage. In proceeding by this way, we don't forget at all to assure not only the storage of the registers of one village but also of its immediate neighbourhood - indeed in our opinion each village is the centre of a human, social, economic, cultural, even linguistic micro-cosmos just composed of this village and its neighbouring communities.

This method allows us to progress rapidly from the rich cost to the poor mountainous parts of the region, especially to the garrigues (of Montpellier and Nîmes) and to the high Cévennes or even to more distant highlands of the Massif Central.

Unnecessary to mention that these registers will be used for a primary family reconstitution that will be connected further with another important languedocian source material: the ancient and modern public registers of lands (compoix and cadastres). Indeed, they permit us to describe exactly not only the division of landproperty or of all cultures before and after the French Revolution but also the devolution of each patrimony within all studied families.

Nominal tax-registers like the "taille" and the "vingtième" will help us to complete our investigation about the economic and geographic cleavages within the languedocian society.

The third important series of documents will be several nominal census lists dressed regularly since the beginning of the French Revolution and going beyond the Napoleonic Empire. Particularly those concerning the revolutionary period permit us to measure the number of active "militants" and, therefore, the real share of the languedocian people in the French Revolution, rather unknown until now.

Including another nominal list from 1787, which mentions all people who want to return to the calvinist confession, a first global approach of the calvinist population persecuted during the whole 18th century would also be possible and inform us about the question if ancient calvinists became massively future republicans.

Finally, it is not unimportant to underline that the input work will be done in the archives - and perhaps with the help of some of their personnel. Indeed CLIO dispenses us with the manual transcription of the originals - and their coding too - so that we will transcribe literally all the sources evoked above.

When IRHIS has finished to input such a large amount of source material on a micro-computer, this material has to be worked upon by CLIO. Always with CLIO we perform linkages of files via names of persons mentioned therein in order to leave the restrained local (village) research and to create a



vastly regional databank.

The way in which this databank will be classed is clear: it will contain at first two files where all informations will be classed behind each family in the first one and behind each individual in the second one. Thousands of popular biographies will complete, then, something like a regional family history.

But our regional databank allows us to create new files which treat precise aspects of the languedocian society:

- a) demographic attitudes
  - fecundity, nuptiality, mortality
  - migratory movements on a regional scale
  - evolution and structure of the languedocian population
- b) social structures
  - socioeconomic hierarchies: landpossession, income, wealth and poverty ...
  - social mobility through several generations
  - sociopolitic classes: profile of their recruiting, of their succession
  - marginal groups: beggars, shephards, soldiers
  - professional classes: structures, functions, evolution, geographic division
  - social classes: nobility, clergy, middle-class, peasants ...
- c) geographic and economic structures:
  - agriculture, industries, commerce ...
  - landscapes: swampy cost, garrigues, Cevennes, aquitanian basin, high-lands (Larzac ...)
- d) cultural structures
  - religion: Catholicism against Calvinism
  - school: from primary school to university, who can read and write?
- e) medical and biological structures
  - medicine: from barber to doctor (Barbier, charlatan, rebouteux, sage-femme, praticien, chirurgien, docteur)
  - disease: cause of death, epidemics ...
  - genetics: hereditary diseases.

The number of files representing a precise theme can increase in proportion to the kind and the quality of the sources we will use. The list of research themes mentioned above shall only give a little idea about the great number of subjects which a regional databank can help us to realize in the following years.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1 For my plioist-doctoral thesis: Paysans des garrigues montpelliéraines, paysans des marais rhénans, 1715-1840. Deux sociétés traditionnelles traitées par ordinateur.
- 2 see Henri Michel, Le Languedoc moderne, in: G. Cholvy (Ed.), Le Languedoc et le Roussillon, Roanne 1982, p. 198.
- 3 see E. Le Roy Ladurie, Histoire du Languedoc, Paris 1974, p. 90.
- 4 L. Dermigny, De la Révocation à la Révolution, in: Ph. Wolff (Ed.), Histoire du Languedoc, Toulouse 1968, p. 384.

- 5 see Y. Maurin, ~~Le problème de la mortalité dans les communes des~~  
étangs à la fin du 18e siècle et au début du 19e siècle, in: Etudes  
sur l'Hérault, 15, 1984. The mortality in the cost villages was very  
high and reached already for children under ten years, 50.4 % at Vic or  
48.3 % at Villeneuve. But Ganges, the most important silk production  
centre of the Cévennes, shows a picture of child mortality not less sad:  
between 1685 and 1792, 2 337 (59.2 %) from 3 944 dead persons were  
younger than five years. See R. Dugrand, Villes et campagnes en Bas-  
Languedoc, Paris 1963, p. 433.
- 6 see J. Smets, Ecologie, habitat et santé: la mutation lente et difficile  
de deux sociétés traditionnelles (XVIII-XIXe siècles), communication  
presented on the 110e Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes, Montpel-  
lier, 1-5 April 1985.
- 7 see H. Michel, op.cit., p. 221.
- 8 see L. Dermigny, op.cit., p. 381.
- 9 see R. Dugrand, op.cit. 1963. See  
about demographic evolution in 18th century p. 431-437 and in 19th cen-  
tury P. 438-464. Between 1801 and 1851 the author has calculated a growth  
of 35.2 %.
- 10 Its research can be compared to a Canadian project combining regional and  
social history about a precise landscape: the Saguenay (1842-1941). See  
G. Bouchard, Un essai d'anthropologie régionale: histoire sociale du  
Saguenay aux XIXe et XXe siècles, in: Annales, E.S.C., 1979, p. 106-125.  
During this period the registers of baptisms, marriages and burials  
contain 340 000 deeds.
- 11 The natal rate is estimated at 45.6 % for 1700-1710, 42.9 % for 1740-  
1750, 40.1 % at 1770 and 39.6 % at 1790 at least 32.5 % and 26.8 % for  
1821-1831 and 1851-1861. The mortal rate seems to fall from 42.5 % at  
1700 to 31.6 % at 1750 and nearly 26 % at 1790 and remains on this level  
until 1861-1871 (26 % in 1821-1831 and 26.7 % in 1851-1861). See L.  
Dermigny, op.cit., p. 387-389 and R. Durgrand, op.cit., p. 432-433. The  
annual number of births could be about 57 000 at 1750, about 68 000 at  
1820 and 61 500 at 1850, and the one of deaths about 44 500, 54 500 and  
60 000 at the same dates. This gives nearly 6 500 000 births, 4 900 000  
deaths and 1 600 000 marriages.
- 12 see L. Dermigny, op.cit., p. 386.
- 13 see the immigration to Nîmes. Leslie Page Moch, ~~Paths to the City. Regio-~~  
nal Migration in Nineteenth-Century France, Beverly Hills/London/New  
Dehli, 1983.

THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ASSESSMENT OF SOFTWARE  
FOR USE IN THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

N.J. Morgan, M.S. Moss, R.H. Trainor (\*) and A.T. Wilson

Abstract: (i) In recent years nine arts-related departments at Glasgow University have been successful in winning funds for the creation of large databases. Although these data are being extensively exploited for research, the great potential they offer for undergraduate teaching remains largely untapped due to the lack of suitably tailored software and hardware provision.

(2) Our objective is to give arts-based students access to these complex highly structured data in the classroom without requiring them to master difficult operating systems. In this way they would gain valuable transferable skills in information technology. These will enhance the historians' traditional skills of evaluating, interpreting and presenting evidence, long recognized as useful by employers.

(3) The scheme will require the establishment of a centrally sited teaching laboratory comprising sixteen micro-computers and fileservers linked to the mainframe through a communications PAD. Chosen to ensure a maximum degree of compatibility, the micro-computers (with the appropriate operating system) will be capable of acting as terminals, as a local area network or as single workstations. A facility technician will be employed to supervise the lab's day-to-day running, leaving a programmer/analyst to concentrate exclusively on applying and developing software for the three designated courses.

(4) The software will enable students to access and scan files with ease and submit complex search, correlative, and quantitative requests by means of a friendly user interface. It will be possible to generate output in alphanumeric and graphic format either on-line or in hard copy. Throughout, priority will be given to transferability and portability, particularly in relation to the complementary project at the University of Edinburgh.

(5) The project will be directed by Dr.R.H. Trainor consulting with a committee representing the participants - the departments of Modern History, Scottish History and Economic History, the University Archives, the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine - and the Computing Service. The latter will provide overall technical supervision. The department of Computing Science will co-operate in formulating an academic staff development programme. With the help of the University adviser on teaching methods the designated courses will be closely monitored in order to assess the value of the particular software, hardware and teaching methods in the project.

---

(\*) Address all communications to: R.H. Trainor, DISH (Design and Implementation of Software in History) Projekt, History Computing Laboratory, 2 University Gardens, University of Glasgow, GB-Glasgow G12 8QQ.